THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) Assistance is provided to sugarcane growers by the Government under the scheme of Macro Management Mode of Agriculture for development of sugarcane including use of varieties by transfer of improved production technologies through field demonstration; training of farmers and extension workers; assistance for farm implements; enhancing production of planting materials and pest control measures. The main features of the Tenth Five Year Plan of the scheme for the development of sugarcane are transfer of production technologies through field demonstration and training of farmers and extension workers as well as assistance in the supply of critical inputs like quality planting materials, farm implements, pest control measures, supply of drip irrigation and setting of heat treatment plants in different sugarcane growing States under Macro Management Mode of Agriculture.

Besides, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food an Public Distribution provides loans to sugar mills from the Sugar Development Fund for the development of sugarcane for various activities like raising of nurseries for seed production, incentives to farmers for improved varieties, setting up of tissue culture laboratories, drip irrigation facilities and ratoon management.

Overcharging on Medicines by Pharma Companies

†589. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many big companies of the country had charged excess amount than the fixed price of drugs from customers during the last three years;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that a committee had been constituted by Government for taking action in this regard separately;

(c) if so, whether any decision has been taken to dissolve this committee; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and the amount recovered till now from these accused drug manufacturing companies for charging excess amount?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) Since the inception of National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) in August 1997 upto January 2006 a demand for Rs. 693.940 crores has been raised in 331 cases as overcharged amount for drugs. Of these, around Rs. 98.76 crores has been recovered upto January 2006 which includes part recovery in cases under litigation as per Court Order.

(b) A three member committee called Drug Prices Liabilities Review Committee (DPLRC) was constituted *vide* Resolution No.23(2)/93-P1, on 21st March, 1994 for quantifying the liabilities arising out of DPCO, 1979.

(c) and (d) Since there was no work with the DPLRC as no new case could be taken up for quantification due to the stay given by the Bombay High Court, the DPLRC has been kept under suspended animation from 31st December, 2005.

Shortage of Fertilizers

590. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:
SHRI AMAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of acute shortage of fertilizers in the country for the ongoing rabi wheat season particularly urea fertilizer whose demand have gone up;

(b) if so, the steps taken to make the fertilizers available to the farmers at an affordable rate; and

(c) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to import fertilizers and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) As against the assessed